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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

: August 18, 1961 DATE

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ACTION ASSIGNED TO:	ACTION TAKEN	
NAME OF OFFICER & OFFICE SYMBOL	DATE OF ACTION	DIRECTIONS TO RM/R

EXTERNAL - POLITICAL (BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

1. Berlin. While the sealing of the borders between East and West Berlin dominated the international political scene during the week, the Soviet press clearly tried to minimize the event by giving it relatively little coverage, by claiming the situation in Berlin itself is quiet and normal, and by making it appear that "reasonable" elements in the West favor negotiations.

The announcement that the GDR had sealed the Berlin sector borders on August 13 at the suggestion of the Warsaw Pact powers followed a period when Khrushchev spoke almost daily (in public speeches and in private conversations with Western ambassadors) of the USSR's resolve to sign a German Peace Treaty in 1961 and readiness to destroy any country which is a member of NATO, if war should break out. This phase seemed to reach a climax in a speech by Khrushchev to a Soviet-Rumanian friendship rally on August 11, when he repeated in public a threat he previously had made privately to the Greek Ambassador to destroy the Acropolis, if necessary, in pursuit of the USSR's campaign to change the status of West Berlin and "to draw a line under World War II."

The damaging implications of the border-closing for the attitude of the East Germans towards the GDR regime and for its internal stability undoubtedly did not escape the Soviet public. Early reactions of the man-in-the street indicated that ordinary Soviet citizens were well aware that the border-closing was aimed at stopping the refugee flow and surprised to learn (by inference from the language employed in the GDR and Warsaw Pact announcements) how large the flow must have been.

If one can assume that the decision to close the borders between East and West Berlin was formally taken at the August 3-5 Warsaw Pact meeting in Moscow, this would help explain Khrushchev's outbursts during the previous week.

Since the announcement on the border closing was made, Khrushchev has not made any public comments on Berlin or the international situation. With the exception of a brief report that he had attended a meeting of regional party secretaries in the Ukraine on agricultural matters, he has foresaken the limelight during the week, and is believed to have withdrawn to his vacation dacha at Gagra, near Sochi.

2. Mikoyan Visit to Japan. Mikoyan's visit to Japan, a country with which the USSR has poor relations, seems to bear some resemblance to his visit, and those of other Soviet leaders, to the US in 1958 and 1959. His speeches in Japan contain many familiar themes employed by Soviet leaders during their visits to the US: the claim that public opinion has been misled about the USSR, boasts of Soviet economic and social accomplishments, reminders of Soviet military power by references to space achievements, appeals to the commercial instincts of business circles on the desirability of increasing trade, and the clouding over of the contradiction between the USSR's demands that the other country must change its foreign policy and alliances and its claims that it is not interfering in that country's affairs.

Soviet press coverage of the Mikoyan visit and the Soviet Exhibition in Tokyo gave the impression that Japanese public reaction was unqualifiedly enthusiastic.

3. Rumanian Visit. A Rumanian party and government delegation headed by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej visited the Soviet Union from July 31 to August 12. The communique issued at the conclusion of the visit alleged the complete agreement of the two governments on a wide range of foreign-policy issues. In essence, the communique appeared to be a compendium of Soviet positions on topics ranging from a peace treaty with Germany to colonialism and Taiwan. Khrushchev used various ceremonies held in connection with the visit as platforms from which to expound the Soviet position on a German peace treaty, to rattle Soviet rockets, and to threaten nations which had Western military bases on their territories.

4. Tunis. According to a brief report in Pravda, August 13, a plane carrying medical supplies for the "victims of aggression" in Bizerte has been sent to the Tunisian Red Crescent Society by the Executive Committee of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

5. Western Military Maneuvers. A brief TASS news despatch from Athens took note of the military maneuvers which are to be conducted in Turkish Thrace by U.S., Turkish and Greek forces from September 14-27. The article commented that these maneuvers on the Bulgarian border are designed to test the utility of the territory as a beachhead against Bulgaria.

INTERNAL - POLITICAL

6. Five Oblast First Secretaries Released in Ten Days. The past week saw the release of three more oblast first secretaries. This raises to five the total of RSFSR oblast first secretaries changed during the last ten days. Two of the three first secretaries, S. M. Butuzov of the Penza Oblast Party Committee (Obkom), a CC-CPSU candidate member, and Ye. P. Kolushchinskiy of the Omsk Obkom, a full member of the CC, were released under circumstances that make their re-election to the CC at the XXII Congress seem unlikely (Despatch No. 143, Aug. 18, 1961). The release of Butuzov and Kolushchinskiy brings to 19 the total of CC figures who are also oblast first secretaries whose status seems to have slipped within the last ten months (WEEKA No. 32, Aug. 11, 1961). The third oblast first secretary released this week was S. O. Postovalov of the Kaluzhskiy Obkom (also a CC candidate member). He is probably still in good standing, since he was released "in connection with his transfer to other work."

7. Progress in the Republics Toward Goskontrol Reorganization. G.V.Yenyutin, Chairman of the USSR Commission of Soviet Control since 1957, now has been confirmed as Chairman of the successor organization: Goskontrol USSR (Pravda, 8/16/61). The appointment of Yenyutin, a CC-CPSU member, suggests anew that reorganization of the Soviet Control Commission will proceed, not by juggling that organization's leadership, but rather by the addition of new powers and functions. The reorganization move announced on July 22 was designed to strengthen internal discipline and to assert stronger controls against

revealed recently widespread abuses and dishonest practices.

Analogous republic control organizations are rapidly being formed. Six union-republic organs have already been formed, authorized by decrees that are carbon copies of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium's decree of July 22. Thus far, Goskontrol organs for republics have been established in the following republics:

Kazakhstan, July 29 (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 8/1/61)
RSFSR, August 2 (Sovetskaya Rossiya, 8/3/61)
Uzbekistan, August 3 (Pravda Vostoka, 8/4/61)
Belorussia, August 5 (Sovetskaya Belorussiya, 8/6/61)
Latvia, August 4 (Sovetskaya Latviya, 8/6/61)
Estonia, August 8 (Sovetskaya Estoniya, 8/9/61)

8. Three Indications of Soviet Social Tensions. The passivity of the Soviet population is a characteristic noted by many foreign observers. An observer in Moscow can gather ample evidence for believing that violence and passion exist very close to the surface. Last week, three reports in the press testified to the accuracy of this belief.

One report involved the execution by shooting of a "hooligan" and six-time criminal repeater, who had been convicted on a charge of murder (Izvestiya, 8/16/61). Unlike some recent executions (Despatch No. 80, 7/28/61), this man was shot for a crime which was actually an offense punishable by death at the time the act was committed.

The second event occurred on August 14 when a ring of criminals uncovered in Moscow was said to have been involved in the theft of more than 180,000 (new) rubles of the people's property. The ring is now on trial (Despatch No. 146, 8/8/61).

A third report concerns an August 9-11 court trial in Murom (a town 160 miles due east of Moscow in Vladimir Oblast) of six persons who "disturbed the peace" and "participated in a bandit raid on the Murom city police station." Three of the accused were sentenced to be shot. (Airgram A-123 8/18/61)

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MILITARY (Begin CONFIDENTIAL)

9. [redacted]

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For the Charge d'Affaires ad interim:

R. T. Davies
First Secretary of Embassy

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